

Technology promises to disrupt a hairy profession.

I like to think of myself as a good tipper, particularly when it comes to the assortment of underpaid and under-appreciated ladies I visit aperiodically for a 'trim'.

I was first taken for a haircut sometime in the late 1930s. The venue was a new combination barber/shoe repair shop in the Bronx, New York. It was staffed, as was the custom, solely with male staff. As a special accommodation, this emporium offered ornate wooden carousel horses as seating for apprehensive children. Now, in the intervening eighty or so years, I have only had 'trims' to restore the contours of that original cut.

However, several decades ago, I encountered my first female barber. This was in New Zealand, the first nation to grant women the right to vote. By 1990, it appeared that all the kiwi barbers were not only female - but fastidious. (I was told that they were required to wash your hair before cutting.)

Not the first kid on my block to get a Captain Midnight secret decoder ring, I have only just become aware of yet another potentially disruptive threat to our world's haircutting protocols - when my son had his hair cut - by his wife. This initiative was instigated by an intrinsic fear of venturing out to places which might facilitate the transfer of virus particles.

My enlightenment didn't end there. Noting my shaggy appearance, my son proposed to cut my hair. Fully armed with clippers, scissors and a comb - plus an online video illustrating how to execute a haircut, my uninitiated son embarked on yet another career - as a haircutter.

With the tutorial video playing in the background, I sat on a kitchen chair with a towel encircling my neck to capture a portion of the liberated hair and absorb any spilled fluids.

The results were instructive, and from a corporate standpoint, distressing. My son's meticulous effort had once more restored my appearance to that of the child on the merry-go-round pony.

And, in unrelated news from the New York Times, today I learned of the availability of the '*fecal immunochemical test (FIT)*', - an at-home test for colon cancer - reportedly as reliable as a traditional colonoscopy. I trust that my son hasn't found out about this yet.

